



Boone County Couple Heads Uphill

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Boone County, West Virginia

Madison, WV - Jack and Elvonna Bowyer had flood insurance, but when severe flooding of the Spruce and Pond Fork Rivers dumped seven inches of water in their first floor and 12 inches of water in their garage, they were at their wits end.



The Bowyers had gotten used to living in their home at the bottom of the hill, but they never got used to the high water and flooding they experienced on a regular basis.

"When I purchased the home in Madison in 1994, there were other nice homes on the street and I just never thought that it would be flooded all the time the way it was," Elvonna Bowyer said.

It didn't take long for the Boone County couple to realize they were "smack in the middle of the floodplain."

"I believe it was in May of 2001, and we just didn't know what we were going to do," Elvonna Bowyer said.

The Bowyer's said when the offer came to be part of FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), which would help them relocate, they jumped at the chance.

"They talked to us during the day and it didn't take us long... by that evening we decided we were going," Elvonna Bowyer said.

In all, four homes qualified for HMGP in the Old River Road area, and in December of 2002, the couple moved into an existing home up the hill. They borrowed additional money to complete renovations. "We were just tickled to death to get out of that damp, dank, bottom (of the hill)," Elvonna Bowyer said.

"I can't tell you the number of times we had to grab the dogs, get the cars and go," Jack Bowyer explained. At night, the couple spoke of one of them getting up to keep watch while the other tried to get some sleep. "You just never knew if it was going to reach us or not," he added.

Now when it rains, the Bowyer's just go back to sleep. "It was well worth it and we don't regret it at all. We are so happy, we call this our 'sleep easy' home," Elvonna Bowyer laughed.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region III**

State: **West Virginia**

County: **Boone County**

City/Community: **Madison**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Acquisition/Buyouts**
Structure Type: **Wood Frame**
Activity/Project Start Date: **01/2002**
Activity/Project End Date: **05/2003**
Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**
Funding Recipient: **Property Owner - Residential**
Funding Recipient Name: **Homeowner**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**
Federal Disaster #: **1378 , 06/03/2001**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**
Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**
Year First Tested: **2003**
Repetitive Loss Property? **Yes**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: **<http://www.floodsmart.gov>**
Reference URL 2: **<http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/>**

Main Points

- Homeowners applied for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to help them relocate.
- "I can't tell you the number of times we had to grab the dogs, get the cars and go," Jack Bowyer, Homeowner in Boone County, WV, explained. "You just never knew if it was going to reach us or not."
- "We are so happy (to be out of the floodplain), we call this our 'sleep easy' home," Elvonna Bowyer laughed.